

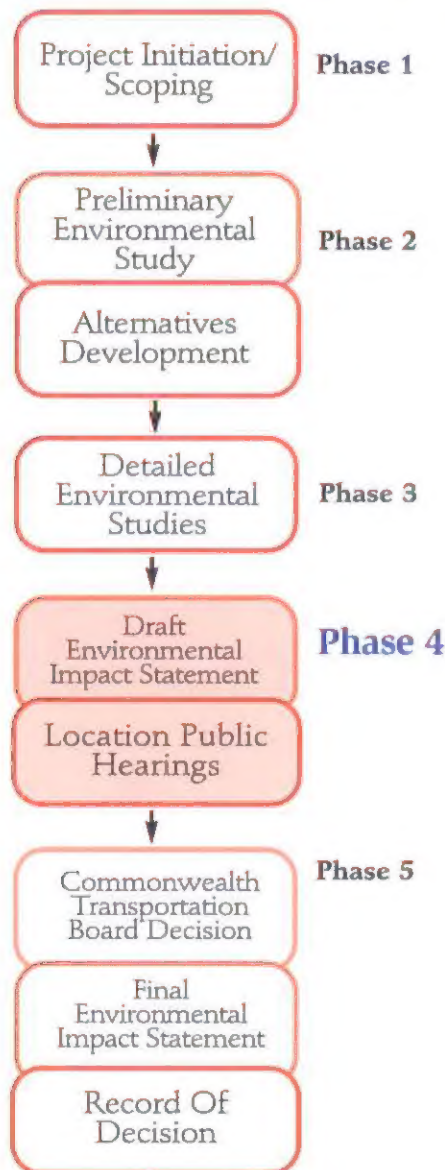
NEWS

Volume 3, Number 1

November 2000

A newsletter designed to inform, assist, and engage the public in developing the best alternative for I-73.

Steps to Success: Where are We?



Now, in Phase 4, all the data thus far developed are compiled into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The document is now available for public review at public libraries, VDOT district and residency offices, and offices of the administrative officer in Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Salem, Vinton, Rocky Mount, Bedford, Botetourt, Franklin County, Henry County and Martinsville. Location Public Hearings are scheduled for December (see schedule in box, right) and the DEIS information also will be available at this time.

I-73 LOCATION PUBLIC HEARINGS SET—Get Involved!

The Location Public Hearing is one of the most important phases in the location study process. It is the only formal opportunity for citizens to make their comments and opinions heard about the alternatives for the proposed I-73.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), a document that includes the Purpose and Need Statement and the environmental and technical analyses conducted on each of the alternatives, is available for public review before, during and after the Location Public Hearings. The DEIS provides specific information about each alternative for citizens to use in developing their opinions. This is the time to assure that all issues of concern to the public are addressed and considered before any recommendations or decisions are made.

Representatives from the Study Team and the Virginia Department of Transportation are available during the Location Public Hearings to answer any questions and to receive public input about the alternatives. The Location Public Hearing transcript will be available for review at the VDOT district and residency offices.

The public input received during the Location Public Hearings is compiled and submitted with a recommendation from VDOT and local governments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, who reviews the information and renders a decision.

Location Public Hearings

Citizens in Bedford, Botetourt, Franklin, Henry, and Roanoke counties, the Cities of Martinsville, Roanoke, and Salem, and the Towns of Rocky Mount and Vinton and surrounding areas, are invited to attend open forum hearings offering a one-on-one opportunity to speak with VDOT officials.

Hearing Schedule:

2:00-9:00 p.m.—Open Forum. Citizens can submit written or oral comments via court reporters to VDOT.

7:00 p.m.—Verbal comment period. Citizens provided three minutes to speak before VDOT officials.

December 11, 2000—Martinsville

Martinsville Middle School
30 Cleveland Avenue

December 12, 2000—Rocky Mount

Benjamin Franklin Middle School—East Complex
375 Middle School Road

December 13 and 14, 2000—Roanoke

The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center
110 Shenandoah Avenue

(free parking will be provided at the Hotel on a space available basis as well as a shuttle to and from Parking lot A of the Roanoke Civic Center)

This map illustrates the Shenandoah National Park region in Virginia. The park's boundary is highlighted in purple, stretching from Front Royal in the north to the North Carolina border in the south. Major transportation routes, including Interstate 66, Interstate 81, and US Highway 220, are shown as thick black lines. The map is populated with numerous numbered labels (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 1a, 2a, 3a) indicating specific points of interest or landmarks. Surrounding areas, including parts of Shenandoah, Roanoke, and Franklin counties, are depicted in light yellow. Water features like the Shenandoah River and various lakes are shown in blue. The map also includes labels for nearby towns such as Front Royal, Rocky Mount, and Lexington, and identifies the state boundaries with North Carolina and West Virginia.

Options
Segment

Proposed Corridors

City

Towns

Interstate Highway

United States Highway

Virginia State Route

County Boundary

State Boundary



5 0 5 Kilometers

3 0 3 Miles



I-73 Location Study

BUILD ALTERNATIVES
ALL OPTIONS AND SEGMENTS

During Phase 3, the I-73 Location Study Team conducted detailed engineering and environmental studies on the three alternatives under consideration. Following is a sampling of some of the data gathered during Phase 3 that will be used to make a decision regarding the proposed I-73.

It is important to note that this is just a sampling of the many categories studied. Citizens should refer to the entire Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a complete report on each of the categories.

Alternative	Traffic and Transportation		Relocation Impacts			Wetlands		Terrestrial Ecology and Agriculture		Design Elements and Costs			
	Reduction in Total Accidents		Residential Units	Non-Profit	Businesses	Total Area Impacted [Ac. (Ha.)]		Prime Farmland [Ac. (Ha.)]		Length [mi (km.)]	Construction Costs	R.O.W Costs (incl. utility costs)	Total
TSM	*	6	0	0	1	4.35 (1.76)		55 (22)		N/A	134	12	146
Option 1	50	340	3	22		26.29 (10.64)		121 (49)		78.8 (126.9)	1,096	167	1,263
Option 1a	50	420	3	23		25.62 (10.37)		84 (34)		79.0 (127.1)	1,156	190	1,346
Option 2	195	463	7	42		35.61 (14.41)		148 (60)		76.4 (122.9)	1,109	211	1,320
Option 2a	195	487	7	42		35.61 (14.41)		146 (59)		74.4 (119.7)	1,076	219	1,295
Option 2b	195	370	7	63		28.69 (11.61)		129 (52)		75.9 (122.2)	1,108	249	1,357
Option 2c	195	479	7	42		33.88 (13.71)		165 (67)		75.9 (122.1)	1,075	210	1,285
Option 3	255	481	16	147		14.85 (6.01)		94 (38)		69.0 (111.0)	930	313	1,243
Option 3a	255	707	11	135		14.85 (6.01)		124 (50)		68.8 (110.8)	959	319	1,278
Option 3b	255	458	15	144		14.85 (6.01)		73 (30)		69.7 (112.2)	942	305	1,247
Option 3c	255	455	14	145		11.84 (4.79)		126 (51)		67.7 (108.9)	936	306	1,242
Option 4	140	341	4	14		21 (8.5)		73 (30)		64.3 (103.5)	950	157	1,107
No Build	0	0	0	0		N/A		N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*TSM improvements would result in marginal but not significant accident reductions as US Route 220 remains the same functional class of roadway.

What Is A Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

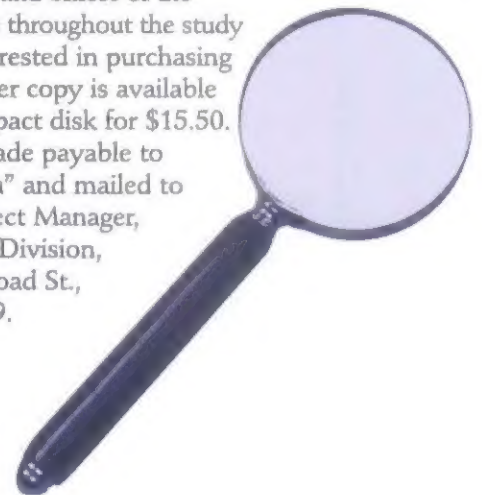
The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is a report that summarizes all of the study done during the first three phases of the I-73 Location Study process: Project Initiation/Scoping, Alternatives Development and Environmental Studies.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement includes a preliminary analysis that considers the environmental effects of the proposed action; the environmental impacts of alternatives to the proposed action; and alternatives available for reducing or avoiding adverse environmental effects.

The report is divided into six major sections. They include: (1) Purpose and Need for the Project; (2) Alternatives Considered (No-build alternative, TSM alternative and Build alternative); (3) Affected Environment (existing conditions); (4) Environmental Consequences (Traffic and Transportation, Relocation Impacts, Land Use, Community Facilities and Services, Historic Resources, Hazardous Materials, Visual Qualities, Air, Noise, Energy, Water Quality, Natural Resources and Agriculture, Threatened and Endangered Species, Section 4(f) Properties, and Design Elements and Cost); (5) References; and (6) Appendices.

The purpose of the public review period is to give people an opportunity to review the documentation and comment on its completeness and accuracy. The release of this document and subsequent public comment regarding its findings are extremely important in providing the information necessary to decide on whether to proceed with development of this highway.

The DEIS can be reviewed at public libraries, VDOT district and residency offices, and offices of the administrative officers throughout the study area. For anyone interested in purchasing the document, a paper copy is available for \$61.00; or a compact disk for \$15.50. Checks should be made payable to "Treasurer of Virginia" and mailed to Patricia Napier, Project Manager, Location and Design Division, VDOT, 1401 East Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219.



Focus On: Purpose and Need

The Purpose and Need section of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement has five major components:

- 1** *To provide safety improvements along the U.S. Route 220 study area.* The area has a high percentage of truck traffic, poor sight distances and steep grades, resulting in a large number of accidents.
- 2** *To support economic growth, economic vitality, and to maintain existing economic competitiveness in the region.* Both the local region and the state of Virginia consider it a priority to improve economic development between southwestern Virginia and the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina.
- 3** *To improve operations, access, and capacity for vehicular and freight movement through the corridor as well as to and from other locations in the Michigan to South Carolina target market.* Federal legislation identified a need to improve the movement of goods between the Great Lakes at Sault Ste. Marie in Michigan and the port of Charleston, S.C.
- 4** *To enhance general mobility and transportation linkage* through both the immediate Roanoke to North Carolina study area and through the broader Michigan to South Carolina travel corridor.
- 5** *To address the Congressional intent* that the portion of I-73 from Portsmouth, Ohio, to Charleston, S.C. be included as part of the Interstate system.

What Happens Next?

Here's the schedule of what happens after the Location Public Hearings:

- ✓ Due to the holiday season, additional time beyond the normal 10-day period is being provided for additional public comment after the Location Public Hearings. Written comments must be postmarked no later than January 12, 2001.
- ✓ Citizen input from the Public Hearings is compiled and submitted with a recommendation from VDOT and local governments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.
- ✓ The Public Hearing transcript will be available for review at the VDOT district and residency offices.
- ✓ The Commonwealth Transportation Board reviews this information and renders a decision.
- ✓ Substantive comments received from reviewing agencies and the public and the responses to these comments will be presented in the final EIS (FEIS). Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve interagency disputes before the FEIS is published. The alternative selected by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, any modification to the project, new information on environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and the rationale for its selection will be discussed in the document.
- ✓ The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must review the FEIS for legal sufficiency before the document is approved and circulated to the public and agencies.
- ✓ The study is complete when the FHWA approves the Final Environmental Impact Statement and issues a Record of Decision. The Record of Decision identifies the selected alternative, documents the basis for the decision, outlines mitigation measures and documents Section 4(f) approvals. The ROD is issued 30 days after the publication of the FEIS notice in the Federal Register.
- ✓ The design, right of way, and construction processes can begin once funding becomes available.

To learn more, please call 1-888-I73-PLAN (TYY users call 1-800-307-4630).

For further information about the I-73 Location Study, please contact:

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Virginia Department of Transportation
Salem District Office
P.O. Box 3071
Salem, VA 24153
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For further information regarding right of way issues, please contact:

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